



The Old Ironsides Report

15 July 2003

BIAP Mass causality exercise tests rescuers' readiness

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1AD PAO

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Three people were killed and 38 others injured after an explosion occurred at Baghdad International Airport, Iraq, Saturday.

Fortunately, it was only practice.

Though only a drill this time, the mass casualty (MASCAL) exercise scenario is a real possibility with the airport soon to open for civilian air traffic.

The purpose of the MASCAL was to ensure the readiness of all emergency response assets at BIAP.

"The big key ... is to get all of the different (military and civilian) emergency response agencies on the same page so the highest number of casualties can be treated at the highest rate of efficiency," said 2nd Lt. David Korty, Company C, 47th Forward Support Battalion executive officer, who tracked casualties and provided command and control for the exercise.

Agencies involved included the 1st Armored Division and Air Force units, the BIAP fire department, Sky Link, Homeland Security, the Transportation Security Agency and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The exercise showed ICAO that should an incident occur there was a plan prepared and ready to execute.

The annual requirement by ICAO was mandatory for the airport to open, said retired Marine Brig. Gen. Mike Aguilar, who now works for TSA.

He added that the exercise proved that there is a sound and executable plan in place.

"With the airport opening soon, the threat of attack is there and the probability of attack is there," Aguilar said. "If any airport in the world should have a plan, it's this one."

According to Lt. Col. Jarrod McGrath, 1AD surgeon, it took four minutes from the time of the call to the arrival of the first fire truck and 11 minutes to the first ambulance at the incident, which is "blazing fast, in medical terms."

Roads leading to the passenger terminals were closed off, and "victims" were transported by ambulance to medical aid stations depending on the severity of their injuries.

The 159th Aviation (Air Ambulance) provided support for those who required air evacuation.



Medical personnel load "victims" from an simulated airport emergency into an ambulance during a mass causality exercise held on the Baghdad International Airport Saturday. The exercise tested emergency responders' ability to handle a large-scale accident or other emergency.

McGrath said they also conducted an exchange with the Iraqi Red Crescent at the access control point to practice moving casualties down town.

The joint operation was another step in helping Iraq rebuild itself, Korty said.

"The sooner we get done and get the airport open, the sooner we can turn it over to the Iraqis," Korty said.

Aguilar, a principal coordinator in the event, said that overall the MASCAL was very successful.

"Over all, I give you a 'B+', which is quite significant considering the airport," Aguilar said to the agencies involved at the exercise's after action review. "Everyone is really well prepared to handle any major incident that may occur, regardless of the cause."

NEWS

Bush Aide: Uranium Flap a 'Bunch of Bull'

WASHINGTON (AP) - The White House sought to put to rest questions over President Bush's disputed claim that Iraq sought African uranium, saying Monday that such fears were not a major component in Bush's case for war.

"This revisionist notion that somehow this is now the core of why we went to war, a central issue of why we went to war, a fundamental underpinning of the president's decisions, is a bunch of bull," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

Claudette Strengthens En Route to Texas

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, Texas (AP) - A hurricane warning was issued for more than 200 miles of Texas coastline Monday as Tropical Storm Claudette lumbered across the Gulf of Mexico, gathering strength.

In coastal areas, campers packed up to go inland and surfers were warned to stay out of the waves. Workers on South Padre piled sand into berms at beach accesses, but Mayor Bob Pinkerton said there were no plans yet to evacuate the resort community.

2 million refugees return to Afghanistan

(AP) Despite their shattered country's problems in building a stable government and economy, the number of refugees who've returned home to Afghanistan with UN help since the fall of the Taliban regime two years ago has passed the 2 million mark, a spokeswoman for the agency reported.

More than 160,000 other Afghans have returned home without UN assistance, she estimated.

N.Y. Times Names New Executive Editor

NEW YORK (AP) - The New York Times on Monday named Bill Keller as executive editor, more than a month after the newspaper's top editors resigned following a plagiarism scandal. Keller, 54, a former Times managing editor and Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign correspondent, was chosen as the permanent replacement for Howell Raines.

Chaplain's thought for the day:

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face ... You must do the thing which you think you cannot do."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6).

SPORTS

Loaiza, Schmidt to Start All-Star Game

CHICAGO (AP) - Esteban Loaiza of the host Chicago White Sox and Jason Schmidt of the San Francisco Giants were picked as the starting pitchers for Tuesday night's All-Star game.

Edgar Renteria of the St. Louis Cardinals will lead off for the National League and play shortstop, NL manager Dusty Baker said Monday. He'll be followed in the NL lineup by Cardinals' teammates Jim Edmonds, who will be in center field, and Albert Pujols in left field.

In other news...

Farmer Offers Rental Cows on Internet

BRIENZ, Switzerland (AP) -- Lovers of fine cheeses are being given the chance to hire their own cheese maker - a brown-and-white cow living on a Swiss mountain.

Dairy farmer Paul Wyler is offering his cows for rent on the Internet, with all the cheese they produce going to the "owner."

"We have already had dozens of inquiries from people who want to rent one of our cows," Wyler told Monday's edition of the Lausanne daily Le Matin. Cows cost 380 Swiss francs (US\$276) for the summer, and Wyler looks after the animals and makes cheese from their milk.

Each cow produces 70-120 kilograms (154-264 pounds) of cheese - soft and hard varieties - which the renter of the cow can collect in September and either sell or use as gifts for family and friends.

Until now, prospective renters have had to go to the pastures to choose their cow, but Wyler is taking photographs of his animals so people can choose them directly from the Internet.

Wyler himself owns 15 cows - hybrids of holstein and simmenthal - but his plan has been so popular that other farmers are now joining in.

Wyler's cows graze on the Alp Tschingelfeld, 30 minutes' walk from the road, and the "owners" are obliged by contract to visit them at least once and spend four hours working in the fields.

Like many mountain farmers, Wyler has no electricity - light comes from solar energy. His cheese is made over a wood fire, with the wood delivered by helicopter.

Wyler came up with the idea because he could not sell as much cheese as he produced every year. He already rents some of his cows to restaurants.

TODAY'S WEATHER

High: 109F

Low: 84F

